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“QUIT INDIA”  
RE-EXAMINED

BY  
H. L. SAITH

INDIAN PRINTING WORKS  
KACHERI ROAD :: :: LAHORE.



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# Preface

**A** LITTLE over an year and half ago, Gandhiji launched his "Quit India" campaign which culminated in his arrest and serious disturbances all over India. There was violence from the side of the people, violence on the part of the Government. who benefitted from it? Of course, the cowardly Japs, who dare not attack, because they knew that India was not an easy morsel to swallow, but who indulged in a good deal of "Banzai" shouts over the ether and painted the Indian situation in a most lurid way. What were the backgrounds of the "Quit India" campaign? It was nothing except to ensure safety of India from Jap invasion and create conditions in which a stiff resistance could be offered to the enemy.

The Jap'is no longer a danger. The gaps in defences of India which was so lamentably clear then have been filled up since then. The disturbances in country have ceased. The old Viceroy who was

## *Preface*

responsible for arresting the leaders and policy of repression has gone. Why don't they bury the hatchet and start afresh with a clean slate?

Could any moment be more ripe for a change of policy on both sides, withdrawal of "Quit India" campaign on part of Congress, and ending of repression on part of Government, followed by release of Congress leaders and formation of a National Government.

These pages deal with second thought on "Quit India" campaign and a re-examination of the whole policy of the Congress and the British Government in light of the new situation on the Burma Front, in the South Europe, and in India itself.

H. L. SAITH.



## CHAPTER I

### Looking Backwards and Forwards

**A**UGUST 1942-1943, one year has passed since we had here the 1916 Irish Easter week—those seven days of Irish history for freedom were the most bloody chapters in the annals of that country—in our own case, that period should also go down, as an important event of India in transition, which has left an indelible mark in our memories.

Looking back, we find that to-day situation has radically altered in India and abroad, since that unlucky August of 1942 ended, after leaving behind a trail of misery and sorrow, which was in keeping with its tradition, for it has been in world history, a month of crisis wars and revolutions. The Indian outlook is not so depressing as it was then, disturbances are reduced, though the leaders remain behind the bars. Abroad the tide of war is turning in favour of the United Nations. Mr. Amery speaking about those bloody days complained some time ago that the British were pressed hard at that time, that

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they had retreated to within 50 miles of Alexandria in the middle East, and on the Burmese border only Monsoons had prevented the Jap steam roller from moving into India. That is no longer true now. One after another strong bastions of Fascism have fallen in Libya, Tunisia, and Sicily, and the armies of United Nations are hammering at the gates of Italy.

The Russians have also for the first time in summer—since the war began on Eastern Front made great progress against the German armies. They have reconquered important places and are now pursuing Germans. The Chinese are no longer hard pressed either, and have driven back the Japanese in several areas. American airforce of General Chennault, and assistance under Lease and Lend Act, have been of considerable help to the Chinese. Though much has yet to be done, the Chinese are not so dis-satisfied and dejected as they were last year. Instead they are hopeful.

Allied occupation in Sicily has led to release of anti-Fascist prisoners in that place, who have joined in the general rejoicings about their victory. In India, the anti-Fascists remain behind the bars. At Quebec, Roosevelt and Churchill meet to thrash out



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new plans for delivering Europe from the Nazi yoke. They have found no plans to end the stalemate in India, which is inhabited by greater number of people than those of all the Europe put together.

Mr. Amery was not the only one concerned with deteriorated situation of the armies of the United Nations, just as he and his fellow Conservatives are not the only persons who have reason to rejoice over the victories of the United Nations in Russia, China, Africa and Europe. The Congress leaders went behind the bars, pleading that the situation of the United Nations was desperate, and it should be remedied. The Working Committee resolution of July 1942 read :—

“ The Committee views with dismay the deterioration of situation on the Russian and Chinese Fronts, and conveys to the Russian and Chinese people its high appreciation of their heroism in defence of their freedom. The increasing peril makes it incumbent on all those who strive for freedom and who sympathise with the victims of aggression to examine the foundations of the policy so far pursued by the Allied Nations, which has led to repeated and disastrous failures. It is not by adhering to such aims and policies, and methods that failure can be

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converted into success, for past experience has shown that failure is inherent in them. These policies have been based not on freedom so much as on the domination of subject and colonial countries, and the continuation of the Imperialist tradition and method. The possession of Empire, instead of adding to the strength of the ruling power has become a burden and a curse. India, the classic land of modern Imperialism has become the crux of the question, for by the freedom of India will Britain and the United Nations be judged, and the people of Asia and Africa will be filled with hope and enthusiasm."

It was the cry of despair that was at that time being echoed by the people in Chungking and Moscow who were feeling the thin edge of the Fascist Sword. They were demanding second front in Europe and an all-out effort to help China in her struggle for freedom. In Moscow, Chungking and Wardha, the enemies of freedom were considered to be the Fascists, as well as those Conservatives in Western countries, who did not realise the peril of these people, and were fidgeting about second front.

The British and Americans heard the cry of



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despair from Chunking and Moscow, and took note of it though they did not do what was asked by those people. Why did they react to the cry from India in a different manner, and take offence over it? Was it because political problems were blended with military considerations in the resolution of Congress, and they sought to ease not only the military situation of the allies, but also the political tension too? But even then they were hardly different from the Russians. Did not political problems weigh heavily with British and American envoys who talked with the Russians about second front? Were political problems such as the status of Baltic countries, Russian attitude towards Poland, towards religion inside Russia, and Communist parties abroad etc., etc., left out of discussions? At least some of them were thrashed out and embodied in a formal agreement, such as that about Baltic countries, while others remained unsolved—due to defective allied statesmanship, and they are proving now great barriers in a lasting understanding between the Russian people and West.

The same is true of India. Here too there were political problems, which had to be solved side by side with the military tangle. The same lack

## *"Quit India," Re-examined*

of statesmanship was shown in this case as in Russia, with the result that though military situation has improved, the political situation remains as it was.

Now they are trying to open up a second front in Russia, and making a fresh effort to end the political problems, which divide the two countries. They are best fitted to do that at this time, when Russian people share their feelings of joy at the victories in Tunisia, Libya and Sicily; and find them bracing up for landing in Europe. The same could be done about India. People who were grieved over the debacle in Russia and China, and allied reverses elsewhere, would be joining them in their rejoicings over their victories. If they could come out of prison and be able to express themselves, they would again applaud the Chinese and Russian peoples, and congratulate the Allies on smashing Fascism in Africa. So far as the willingness to fight Fascism is concerned, as in Russia it existed inspite of the opening of the second front, so in India, it has always been present among the people. When faced with dark military situation, the Russians did not give up their determination to fight the Fascists, the Indians



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were also undeterred by the reverses, and voiced hatred against Fascism in the following words :—

“The ending of British rule in this country is thus a vital and immediate issue on which depends the future of the war, and the success of freedom and democracy. A free India will assure this success by throwing all against the aggression of Nazism, Fascism and Imperialism. This will not only affect materially the fortunes of the war, but will bring all subjects and oppressed humanity on the side of the United Nations, and give these nations, whose ally India would be, the moral and spiritual leadership of the world. India in bondage will continue to be the symbol of British Imperialism and the taint of that Imperialism will affect the fortunes of all the United Nations.”

The way the Congress talked may have, as well been done by the Russians or the Chinese, about the political problems which divided them from United Nations such as the Polish question, or the Chinese Emigrants in U. S. A., the future relations of American and British traders with Chungking Government, etc. Wardha's voice was hardly more shrill than those of Chinese patriots,

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when they talked about Chinese Nationalism, or "Isvestia" or "Pravada", when it dealt with question of freedom of the people of Baltic States, Bylo-Russia, or Poles, who had escaped from Sikrosky or Hitler terror into Soviet territory. Russians fought on inspite of these problems remaining unsolved.

The Indian soldiers have helped the United Nations in their victories against Fascist forces. Indian people have remained unperturbed by Jap threats of invasion, and solidly arrayed against Fascism. The only blackspot in this affair has been the arrests of Congress leaders, and the disturbances which followed it.

But must all this blur our vision of the future, when to-day the shouts of joy are being raised on the Russian, Chinese and South European fronts, and the day for which the Congress leaders yearned, and prayed has come, and the military situation is bright on all fronts. Have not such things happened among other friendly nations knit together in the anti-Fascist cause? The Russians and the Poles have quarrelled violently, because of political problems. Relations were severed between two countries. Polish Government accused Russians



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of murder of their citizens near Smolensk ; which never happened. They excited those Poles who were on Russian territory, and the Russians actually executed two of them ; on charges of counter-revolutionary activities. The British and the Americans quarrelled for so long about attitude towards Darlan, Giraud, etc., and there were serious Press duels across the Atlantic, which still go on. Yet the two countries have not retaliated by imprisoning their citizens or branding of them as "rebels".

Doubtlessly the relations between Britain and India have been much more strained than those between various other countries forming the United Nations. The orgy of riots and bloodshed that has been seen here has not been the feature of such quarrels in those countries. But the basic cause of misunderstanding is the same. Like the Russian, the Chinese, a section of British Socialists (which is critical of American attitude towards near Fascists in Africa and Europe), we are a people of an old anti-Fascist tradition dating back to Lahore Congress. Since then year after year we have voiced our anger against the barbaric rule in Germany, Japan and Italy. We were prepared

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to die for these convictions, but we never knew that our comrades-in-arms were to be the same reactionaries and Conservatives in England, who had appeased Fascists, and to whom we were opposed in India. It was this sudden realisation of having to fight Fascists with such strange comrades-in-arms that created so many misunderstandings between England and this country. Some of our amazement was at least shared by the Russian and the Chinese people, who also found like us, that while in military matters, there were certain points of disagreement between them, in political sphere it was much worse—with the result that there was complete lack of understanding on each side for the other's point of view.

But there was one vital difference in our condition. Our relations with England, were not that of one independent country with another, but of a country dependent on a foreign power in political and economic matters. To some extent this dependence on American capitalism was the cause of uneasiness in Chinese Nationalist and British Socialist circles about American war aims. But it was not as far reaching as in our case. Thus the political problems dating back to pre-



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war period which stood between these countries were that of one state with another—in our case, it was the problem of getting freedom ; from a people who were our rulers as well as comrades-in-arms against Fascism.

We were technically, and educationally much backward than our rulers, but politically a few steps ahead of them in our determination to fight Fascism. We could also discriminate between Imperialism and Fascism in a clear way, which as it appears from the recent rebuke of "*Daily Herald*" to Winston Churchill about use of word "Empire" instead of "Commonwealth", the head of the State in England is unable to do.

If the ruled become politically much more advanced than the rulers, friction comes, as it came between Mexico and U. S. A. some time ago, when the former sought to Nationalise the foreign owned companies in its territory.

But the height of wisdom is not accentuating such differences but noting that they existed, have existed since Fascism came in Europe, and though we cannot take it upon ourselves to bring the British people politically to our level, the best course would be to leave their political education or re-education



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after the war to themselves, and narrow our differences, as far as possible to enable the anti-Fascist Front to be maintained

The victories on the Russian, Chinese and South European fronts have eased the military situation, which had flabbergasted both countries, and led to the question whether there was not something wrong with Allied handling of military affairs. India was alarmed about the future of the cause of freedom, because it felt that Fascism was sweeping its way to success everywhere. It had no doubt that the Russians and the Chinese were being let down by British and Americans, and further that even in latter countries the power was in hands of those Conservatives, who had in the past never stood up to Fascism. It saw danger right and left. Danger from German *Wehrmacht*, sweeping down the Caucasus into the North-West Frontiers of India, and the Japanese stabbing us in the back by marching across the Burmese borders in Bengal. For the first time in history we faced an invasion from our Eastern Frontier—Burma, and after a lapse of a thousand years from North-West Frontier. There was every ground for alarm. The situation was not dis-similar to that of England in



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summer of 1940. The people felt that if Russia could not stand against Germany, Iran will not, nor Afghanistan, and the gates to India were open. They were nervous and wanted to have all the power in their hands, so as to save their country. The British as it happens in such moments of high tension thought that every Indian who wanted home rule was a Fifth Columnist with a secret dealing with Japan. Now in Africa, a great battle has been won by superiority of American production of tanks and aeroplanes, and in China and Russia, a determined people have thrown back foreign marauders.

The tense military situation which influenced the Working Committee's July resolution has ceased to exist on these Fronts. In military sphere the Allies are winning, but it does not mean as the Working Committee resolution feared political side of warfare should be neglected. That the Allies cannot do without it is being realised by them in opening negotiations with Russia to solve political problems. The same they should do about India. On both sides there should be a change of the hearts. The Indian National Congress would have to revise its opinion about methods of allied warfare, and

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not take the pessimistic view, which they were entitled to do in the past, because of military blunders of allied command. The—doubts about the sincerity of American and British Governments in fight against Fascism will also have to be given up, for though some defeatists, Imperialists, and reactionaries still continue to make their voice heard in those countries—broadly speaking they have now hitched their bandwaggon finally to the cause of anti-Fascism. Their full resources are coming into play against Fascism, and there can now be no question of their using us, the Chinese or the Russians as tools for defeating Fascism and leaving all the fighting to be done by us.

On the side of the British, they should take note of the American policy towards French North Africa, with which they concurred. In that country they had to recognise the independence of French North Africa, and then join hands with General Giraud. True the main problems of future Government of France remain unsolved, and have been postponed till after the end of war, yet French independence has been accepted and provisional council consisting of the representatives of both Giraud group and the fighting France has been



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formed. They should do the same about India. Here too the detailed plan about future Indian constitution could be left to some other time and a Government with full powers, not a shadow regime formed at the centre. This is only one part of the immense change that is overdue. A confidence in allied military genius on the side of Congress and applying of North Africa Policy in India by the British—would not be enough. The question of change of hearts raises far-reaching issues. The Working Committee resolution of July 1942, was not an isolated event, but a consequence of the changed policy of Congress after the departure of Sir Stafford Cripps.

The entire plan of "Quit India" was conceived in an atmosphere of suspicion, uncertainty about future, and danger threatening from across the Burmese border. More than the debacles on Russian, Chinese, and African Fronts, what the Congress was concerned with was immediate bombardment of India; the increasing panic among the people, and famine. Japan loomed large on Indian horizon. It was in April that the idea of "Quit India" was first outlined by Gandhi in columns of Harijan, and it was the

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time when Japan's strength had reached its peak. Country after country had fallen a victim to its bestial warfare. People here knew that their turn would be the next, and they realised the utter unpreparedness of this country to face the attack. It was like the atmosphere in England after Munich, when sensible people there demanded abdication of a Government, which had made very little preparations to meet the danger of Fascist aggression. Indians thought Burma as a kind of Munich, for though fighting was put up here unlike Munich, it was a very half-hearted one and without organised military strength to support it. No wonder then the Indians were impatient of change in regime. Those who think too harshly of the Congress stand might as well remember the agitation against Munich men in England, the uproar about military disaster in Norway, and recently the American indignation at certain of its officers for neglect of defences of Pearl Harbour.

But this analysis of Congress fears about Japan, should not justify the latter happenings, of violence which were by no means connected with Congress.

It also does not preclude a change in that attitude to-day when the Japanese menace is no



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longer acute. Indeed such a change is most desirable. Nay, looking back one feels, that Congressmen, sincere anti-Fascists, had become too much alarmist about Japanese menace, and insisted on immediate withdrawal of the British, while John Bull alike throwing caution to the winds had descended on war path with Indian Nationalists. Subsequent events do not justify the hasty conclusions that each side drew about the other's intentions at that time.

How the relations worsened is not a subject on which, we should dwell at length now. That would be only stressing the differences, and if anything worsening the already strained relations. The Historian of that struggle in 1943, ought to be concerned with the broad lessons that emerged out of Congress policy as it developed after April 1942.

The alarm about Japanese invasion which had inspired the "Quit India" campaign, increased as the time passed on. In May according to the Government white paper issued months latter Gandhiji wrote :—"The presence of the British in India is an invitation to Japan to invade India, their withdrawal removes the bait."

## *“Quit India,” Re-examined*

The march of time has been, however, different. The Japanese are not influenced by sentimental considerations of hostility towards British as Gandhiji thought they would. What influences their strategy is the military situation, and armed strength. Because a large concentration of allied war material in Australia and New Guinea, and the recent opening of a vast Front in South Pacific—New Georgia Islands threatens the Japanese rear, while in China great reserves of their strength remain bogged up and a Northward sweep on Japan proper from Kiska, Attu, and Dutch Harbour is imminent—in view of all this Japanese have held up their advance on India. If the scales were not so heavily drawn against Japan in these areas she would have attacked India, no matter who ruled it—Britain or Indian Nationalists.

Now that the worst has not happened, why raise the sentimental cry against the British presence, instead of trying to find out a way by which some understanding could be arrived at between the two countries in order to further, what the Congress has always aimed at—the annihilation of Fascism? To-day the bait to the Japanese for an attack on India if they prove themselves capable of such



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madness, is not the British presence, but the vacillation on side of Britain and Congress to come to some understanding between themselves and present a United Front to her. The Japanese can be influenced by the uncertain situation, that is prevailing in this country into a foolhardy venture against our Motherland. What, therefore, needs to be, understood is this Jap weakness to attack, and taking advantage of it to hurl back this Pacific monster beyond the frontiers of Burma and Malaya.

The entire foundations of "Quit India", resolution, and that of Government policy of repression have to be re-examined in light of this change in atmosphere.

But it is not the march of time, which alone reveals the unsoundness of position of both sides, and their being goaded into extremism by high tension in the country and abroad. There are certain other features of the "Quit India" resolution, which should have even at that time without the change in international situation, needed clarification. Neither side attempted any searching of hearts. The Government white paper which has been quoted previously goes on to say that "Later, he (Gandhiji) admitted the possibility that Japan might invade

## "Quit India," Re-examined

India despite the withdrawal of the British and the Congress agreed to stationing of allied troops in India to ward off Japanese attack."

"Two basic motives emerge as the foundations of Mr. Gandhi's proposals", says the document. "The first is the desire to free India finally from British domination, the second is the desire to avoid at all costs India's becoming a theatre of active warfare and battlefield between Britain and Japan. Mr. Gandhi did not believe that non-violence alone was capable of defending India against Japan. Nor had he any faith in the ability of the Allies to do so. Even if it could be supposed that Mr. Gandhi and the Congress proposed to pin their faith on the ability of the Indian troops to defend India, it should be noted that the former himself admitted that the ability of allied troops to operate effectively would depend upon the formation of a suitable provisional Government".

The document further goes on with characterising the men who wished to form a provisional Government, as defeatists and pro-Japanese and quotes Gandhiji's willingness to negotiate with Japan, as a proof of such defeatism.

The readiness in the Government communique



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to impute motives to the Congress should be noted, as also the reference to Congress willingness to stationing of allied troops in India. To-day it seems that the two sides had little basic differences, they were quarrelling over words and influenced by past rather than the dynamic present, reading into each other's sayings meanings which did not exist there. When the Congress agreed to stationing of allied troops in India, it is difficult to understand, why the slogan of "Quit India" was raised.

If one is to admit (since falsified by the events) the theory of a foreign Government being influenced by the presence of British in India, then troops are much more a bait to it, than the presence of a British Civilian administration at Delhi. Even if the British had withdrawn from India and if all depended on what was "the bait for Japan", then they would have attacked all the same, and considered British withdrawal as a mere ruse being played upon the "Simple Son of the Gods", by utterly unreliable Indians in alliance with Britain.

Does the Vichy regime seem any less Fascist to allied eyes, because only a German military occupation exists, and most Frenchmen previously Vichyists have come "over the divide" to allied side, and no

## *“Quit India,” Re-examined*

Civilian French Government exists in the South part of France? Would allies not attack Italy, if Badoglio regime were to withdraw from Rome, leaving Italy in possession of German troops? Did the Americans, while negotiating with Darlan and Giraud before landing troops in Africa insist on mere withdrawal of axis agents in that part of the country, or expressed the desire that they wanted to expel with force the German and Italian Fascist hordes?

One cannot expect therefore that Japan could be satisfied with withdrawal of British “Power”. In fact the Congress had agreed to stationing of troops, because it wanted to give battle to Japan and was irreconcilably opposed to Fascism. That was the real moving spirit of the entire resolution, and it was being clouded by such phrases as “Quit India,” because neither Britain nor the Congress was in a mood to calmly reason about a scheme by which collaboration against Fascism could be carried out.

They did not realise that political power in modern times is synonymous with armed strength. That a country whose armies are stationed in a land to all intent and purposes dominates its domestic and foreign policy. The example of Rumania, Hungary, and other South European places best



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illustrate this truth. "Quit India" with stationing of British troops accepted, was an anamoly, and a sentimental preposition, which could be carried only in that heat of tension, and it could offend people who were similarly effected by that tension.

Now, when matters have cooled, it should not give any offence to Britain, because of its wording. What in fact it wanted was to give to Britain, much more than they have got out of several months of alliance with the French Government in Africa and which they hope to get from Badoglio, by insistently hammering at Italy, but which he may not give—judged by his past militarist and Imperialist activities—namely the solidarity of Italian people against Germany ; and employing of full resources of the two countries to crush the Fascist monster. What they have been taking so much trouble to get in Europe, they had in India—only for a song. As it happens, they misunderstood this plan—for they have never understood our country well—and considered it a mere camp follower in their war rather than equal partner in it.

The leaders were also a little effected by their unresponsiveness which they took down as an example of "British perfidy", but the plan was harmless.

## *“Quit India,” Re-examined*

Gandhi's “Quit India” like all his previous campaigns was aimed at benefitting Britain much more than they could ever dream of. He had again proved to be in Ellen Wilkinson's words “The best Policeman of Britain in India”.

In view of this the Congress insistence on British withdrawal, and the British insistence on calling them defeatists and pro-Japanese, brought about a Shakespearean comedy of errors, which turned out to be a grim tragedy, that both countries have reason to regret, for it has not helped either of them.

Now that the shadow of the Nippon does not loom large in the horizon, and the day of reckoning with Japan is drawing to a close, both sides should think in terms of the future. Britain should shake off suspicions about Congressmen being pro-Japanese and defeatists and trust them at least as much it is doing the Communists in England who were also in 1939, 1940, and part of 1941 remembered in the same manner as Congressmen are now, but who were later on accepted as sincere comrades in struggle against Fascism and allowed to organise the workers to help the common cause. The Congressmen should also give up the subtle differentiation (which exists on paper only) about the British and



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American troops and the British regime with its representative as Viceroy in Delhi. If they accept the stationing of British troops they should have good terms with the latter, so that the enemy should be knocked out after which the common disputes could be thrashed out in detail. They should remember that as Gandhi admitted in his article in "Harijan" "to every Japanese" they have greater prospect of coming to an understanding with Britain rather than with Japan. The Japanese would not care about their subtle discrimination about British Government and British army. They would hang them for a dog as well as for a sheep.

Instead of the slogan being to-day "Quit India", which with provision of retaining British and American troops sounds much like saying to a guest, "get out, but leave your luggage behind" the slogan is "End Famine", and "End Anarchy".

Gandhiji had in those high tension days said that even Anarchy was preferable to the state of affairs then prevailing. That like the grief over the worsening situation in Russia, China and Africa, and "Quit India" slogan was born of a desperate situation in which the country then found itself.



## “Quit India,” Re-examined

Now that high tension has somewhat melted down, the anarchy instead of being a stop-gap phase is becoming permanent. It was with Burma and Malaya in view and the destruction that Japan had brought there that Gandhiji preferred Anarchy to *status quo*. Japan has not let loose hell on earth in this place. Even if it had toleration of Anarchy would have been poor alternative for full resistance to the enemy. But at least it could be said that then both Congress and Government were getting desperate, and they could go to any lengths ; as desperate men usually do. But now why is there no effort being made to end the stalemate ?

Other, less abler and more reactionary people than Congress are stepping into office and trying to win laurels by combating famine and Anarchy. Men who were till yesterday treated with utter contempt by the Congress, and the people are to-day basking in sunshine of popularity. Britain fighting hard against Fascism could point out to the world that Congress is staying behind in this struggle of its own accord. It could mention the functioning of provincial autonomy in some provinces as a proof that Congress has lost popularity with the people.

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Doubtless these statements could cut both ways. Whereas they are aimed at isolating Congress from the World opinion, the isolation of Britain, and its falling in favour with people in other countries, such as America. China and Russia is a natural corollary. This would be held up by those people as a proof of inability of Great Britain to launch successful political warfare. With England, it is not a question to-day of imposing one Versailles treaty on Germany, and leaving the posterity to reap a sour harvest of it, while there was no opposition from any other quarter. This time they are making no mistake of dangling before Germany another Versailles, and are, more sensibly reserving their energies for annihilating Fascist War criminals. But Vansittartites lurk here and there, and they should remember that to-day it is not a question of signing a treaty with the enemy country only—there are many differences on the allied side which have also been to be talked out ; and agreements embodied in treaties. China, Russia and India present as great political problems as Germany and Italy ; and on their solution depends the good reputation of British statesmanship. Thus the lack of understanding in



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India is discrediting the British Government as well as the Congress in the eyes of the world.

Anarchy and lack of stable Central Government can hardly be a matter of satisfaction for the British. Americans are very much worried if in South America, any country has unstable regime, where disorders are frequent, and people are indulging in rioting. Such a state disturbs the American hopes about a peaceful Western Hemisphere. India occupies in the Eastern possessions of Britain the same position of importance that Brazil, Argentine do in case of American possessions in the Western Hemisphere. If Brazil or Argentine, were without a Central Government, New York would show much more interest than London is showing at present in India.

To the Congress too Anarchy should be disturbing in view of its past role in Provincial Government when order was ruthlessly maintained. Then the Congressmen came to an understanding with Britain because they wanted to maintain order in the country and not let Government pass in hands of reactionaries. Now the same conditions exist. Since the Cripps Parleys Congress has hitched

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its bandwaggon to working a Parliamentary Government in collaboration with Britain for some time after which the latter was to abdicate all power. There can now be no question of either going back to September 1939, or Ramgarh Policy of civil disobedience with Non-embarrassment. The Congress had definitely taken sides ideologically as was clear from the anti-axis sentiments in its resolutions after the Cripps mission. The "Quit India" demand which was an anomaly in the Congress anti-Fascist resolutions holds no longer good in the light of new experiences both in Africa and our Burmese border. We are back at the period of negotiations with Cripps, which fell through due to intransigence of British Conservatives, and their hold-what-you-have attitude. Only the atmosphere is not same as at time of arrival of Cripps. There could be no fear now of hasty talks with sword of Nippon hanging over our heads. The British are now sending Eden to Moscow; along-with Cordell Hull. Let them send some such minister to India, but not a labour party man. They send full blooded Conservatives to Moscow, why not do the same about India. Let them have confidence



## *“Quit India,” Re-examined*

in him, as they did not have in Cripps, and let him come with clear-cut plans from the Downing Street. It is easier to talk with such Conservatives as Eden, Beaverbrook, or Halifax, for inspite of divergence of their views with Indians Nationalists, they could represent the mind of the British Cabinet, and could commit their country to any measures to be adopted about India.

A labour Partyman in a Conservative Cabinet is neither a Socialist nor a Conservative. He tries to satisfy both sides, and he fails. They have now become much more serious about solving political problems with Russia, than they used to be. In case of India, sooner or latter they would have to do the same. Would they do it in good time now, or would it be, when they hold a similar Quebic Conference about War with Japan somewhere nearer East in Teheran or Moscow that they would finally take up the political problem of India?

## CHAPTER II

### Whose Terror ?

**T**HE outbreak of violence both against the Government, and against the people by officials responsible for law and orders, must end before an atmosphere could be created in which Congress and the British could amicably settle their differences. After a few days of the outbreak of the August disturbances, Mr. Amery somewhat glibly spoke in the Commons about the successful liquidation of all trouble in India. He impressed upon his countrymen that since the Congress leaders were held safely behind the bars, there was no danger of any recrudescence of riots. Since then, however, news continue to pour in about the disturbances. This continuance of riots long after all the Congress leaders and most of the influential members of that organisation have been clapped into prison conclusively proves that, *agents provateurs*, and men outside the Congress have been carrying on such anti-people activities. The Government can say that people responsible for such



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disorders are those who are Congress sympathisers. But most Congress sympathisers who could indulge in such riots are known to them. It should be easy to spot them, and in case of danger put them behind the bars as has been often done. But if it were either the Congressmen, or Congress sympathisers at work behind the scenes, all this trouble should have been long disposed of.

The violent outbreaks are more often the work of people who would not like to see, the Congress-Government line up against Fascism, and also it is due to the economic unrest. Indeed it is likely that rioters in most places have been actuated by economic, rather than political motives. In most cases of riots Government reports have spoken of people indulging in looting of foodstuffs especially flour. The food-looters have advanced even under the hail of bullets. The loss to Government property have no doubt been immense, but the loss to private property, especially the food-mills has not been negligible either. The enemy agents and the distressed element of the population have combined to rob India of her peaceful life. Sabotage, arson and murder of Government officials has not been the

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work of men, who have wanted British troops to stay in India in order to defend the country against Fascism, and mourned bitterly the allied losses in Russia, China, and Africa.

It passes comprehension how three four months after the Cripps negotiations the Congress leaders could spread a secret sabotage plan to far corners of India and organise violent activities. All evidence available shows that after the Cripps departure, they continued to harp on the need of stationing of allied troops in India to defend it against Fascism. The "Quit India" plan and the last minute threat of Civil Disobedience was only a peaceful protest against the apathy visible in certain quarters in England to shelve the Indian question. It was neither revolt nor an invitation to revolt, as Mr. Amery characterised it. It was hedged in on so many sides by provisions of fight against Fascism and help to people of Russia, and China, that the rabble determined to create trouble could scarcely read into it the meanings Mr. Amery read; it was not a message to them to march on, but to hold up their advance.

The only message which the Congress leaders



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had given to India, and indeed which they had opportunity to give, after their release from prison, was one of resistance to Japan spread by Nehru and Azad in their speeches before the Cripps arrival, and by Gandhi, in his denunciation of Japan from his retreat in Sabarmati. These indefatigable champions of anti-Fascist cause took to every corner and every street of India the message of revolt, not against Britain, but against Japan. When the Cripps parleys failed, and the Congress pinning its faith in resistance to Japan by the people of India, and troops of United Nations, asked the British to withdraw their power from India, the only inference which the man in the street drew from it was that the British had not allowed the Congress to form a National Government to resist Japan, and the Congressmen wanted to have all the power themselves for that purpose, and asked British to withdraw, and let them do the fighting. When Gandhi, talked about peaceful demonstration against British by Civil Disobedience, the man-in-the-street knew that ~~something~~ was wrong, that Gandhi was annoyed because he had not the powers to resist Japan. Even then Japan remained the main

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enemy. How could it enter into his heads that he was asked to revolt against Britain, and smash up the whole show with violence?

It was not these people steeled in the tradition of anti-Fascism, who had indulged in violent moves calculated to help the enemy—Japan. It was that section of enemy agents and street rabble, which was waiting for Congress-Government relations to worsen to stab the Congress in the back; and thus give a peaceful friendly protest the appearance of a vastly engineered revolt.

If the Congress was determined on such a violent revolt why should have her leaders gone to city after city of India to spread hatred against Japan before the arrival of Cripps. February and March 1942 which were spent in such anti-Japanese propaganda could be used to stir up such senseless revolt against Britain. Japan's pressure on the United Nations was very heavy in those days. In North Africa, though the British were trying hard to wrest the initiative from the axis, and had achieved some local gains, yet the Germans benefitting from dispersal of British naval strength in the Far East, were landing big number of troops and material there to launch a big offensive.



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Danger threatened in North Africa. Russia, bleeding from her wounds was trying to regain lost territory from the Germans, and she could hardly render any help to the United Nations in the Pacific.

If the situation was favourable for Congress revolt in summer of 1942, as Mr. Amery assured us, it was much more favourable in the early months of that year. It was, however, not favourable for those mischief-makers who were to let loose a campaign of violence in India months later. The enemy agents were not so numerous in this country for, their master—Japan was not yet close enough to India to render them increased help and guide them in their treacherous activities. It was with the fall of Burma that greater infiltration of enemy agents was to begin here, and pro-fascists were to receive full attention of the Nippon. Unknown to the patriots, unknown to the Government, these enemies of country were lurking here and there waiting for the time when there should be some differences in the anti-Fascist Front of Indian National Congress with Britain, when they could play their treacherous role. A few months more of solidarity of the anti-Fascist Front would have meant the doom of these saboteurs and Fifth Columnists.

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If the British Government had not made the ghastly mistake of doubting the sincerity of anti-Fascist views of Congress, and not imprisoned its leaders but instead negotiated with them, then, it could be easy to deal with enemies of the country lurking about here and there. As soon as the tide of war had turned, as it has now, there was time enough to corner these people, and have them shot out of hand.

The Congressmen could themselves when entrusted with power deal with these saboteurs, and trace out their conspiracies before it had ripened.

As it was the Government in suppressing the Congress lay itself open to the same danger from the Right to which the Social Democrats were exposed in Germany in the twenties, when they meted out a stepmotherly treatment to the Communists.

Hitler and his fellow cut throats were able to indulge freely in riots and bloodshed once their major enemies the Communists were out of the picture, because of the balance of forces overwhelmingly arrayed against them. Just as the danger from abroad, then from France which had occupied Ruhr and looked menacingly at Germany threatened that country, similarly India was threatened with foreign attack in 1942. For the Social Democrats



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the best policy would have been to rally all the radical elements in the country against France, and thus strengthen their regime in face of attack from the Conservatives at home and abroad. For the Indian Government the best policy was to strengthen the anti-Fascist front with Congress, which had existed since the Jap invasion of Pearl Harbour. The social Democrats lost power to the Nazis ; after being badly mauled up in the streets of Germany. The Indian Government has not lost power to these Indian Nazis, but she had come very nearly to that—only the great victories in Mediterranean and licking of Japs in China, and South Pacific saved it. Like the Social Democrats, its officers including the Policemen have been badly mauled up by these Rightists.

How much loss was rendered to life and property by these extremists has not been known. Stupendous figures have been quoted by the Secretary of State in Commons about the murders committed, and the damage to Railways which runs into crores.

Much remains unknown yet. Many of the saboteurs were killed by air attacks or in encounters with police, and they best knew the extent of damage

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they had rendered. They have taken these secrets to their graves. Dead men tell no tales.

Some idea of the destruction of life and property can be had from the recent figures published by the U. P. Government.

It describes the number of arrests in that Province as 16,000, while the fine collected amounted to 28.32 *lakhs*. There were 425 cases of sabotage to telephone and telegraph wires. 104 Railway Stations damaged. 15 being burnt down. 16 Derailments of trains occurred, and there were 100 instances of sabotage to Railway tracks. 16 members of Police Service were murdered, 332 injured. 119 Post offices were destroyed and the number of Postal employees attacked was 32.

This is only about one Province. Other Provinces such as Bihar, Orissa, Bombay and Central Provinces figured prominently in these disturbances, and in some of them the trouble was much more acute than in U. P.

As far the Government responsibility for these outbreaks, partially the blame rested with them. Though even if they had not taken the unnecessary step of arresting Congressmen, and thus breaking up the anti-Fascist Front, these troubles would have



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happened in any case. The Fifth Columnists reinforced by Jap presence in Burma were to create mischief in any case. Their activities could, however, be considerably checked if instead of chasing the Red herring of Congress, the Government had devoted attention to exterminating this rabble.

By arresting the Congress leaders an atmosphere was created in which the Fifth Columnists, undeterred by the watchful eye of the patriots could indulge in sabotage.

As for the major part of population, it steered clear of such insane activities, though here and there the mischief-makers did succeed in magnifying the quarrel between the Congress and the Government and exciting innocent people to violent actions.

All these events pained the Congress leaders and Gandhiji. The latter in his correspondence with the Viceroy appealed to him to stop this bloodshed ; by restraining the Government officials from repression. Surely repression was hardly the method for these people. It cannonised them into martyrs, and brought their activities in eyes of the public. There are only two methods of dealing with saboteurs known to modern statesmen. The one is the

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German one of ruthless violence against all inhabitants, where sabotage takes place. The Nazis raze to ground a village, or a town, from which they suspect the saboteurs to have come. The most horrible instance of such a crime is that of the sack of the village of Lidice in Czechoslovakia, because it was believed that Gauleiter Heydrich's assassins had been sheltered in that village. The Nazi hounds were unleashed against this helpless village, all its adult male population taken out of homes, and shot dead, women and children were taken to concentration camps, and then the entire village was burnt to ashes. All this has been since then repeatedly done in Russia by the Nazis. So shocked was the civilised world by such crimes that in England, and America, the Czechs, and other freedom minded people appealed for severe reprisals against the Nazis and blasting out of the map of earth some of their villages.

That is however one way, and it seems a very crude way of ending sabotage. It has never succeeded so far. Sabotage continues in Europe.

The other and more sensible way is of leaving it to the population to trace out the saboteurs, and punish them. This can be done only if the anti-



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Fascist Front is built up in the country, with Congress, the League and other organisations as the nucleus of it and anti-sabotage Committees formed by people in every village and every street.

How the British have been dealing with the saboteurs so far, is by tracking out individuals responsible for such actions, and then bringing them to book.

Sometime these saboteurs take shelter in villages, and then it is not only they who have to be chased out, but also innocent villagers suffer hardships in this man-hunt. Fines have been imposed in several cases on people living in areas where sabotage occurs. This is not the democratic way of dealing with sabotage. So great amount of money is being wasted by the Government in such a way, and the energy that could be better used in exterminating the Jap is thus spent on tracking out the vermin, which could be easily collared by the populace, and brought to book.

It seems the utter futility of such methods of man-hunt by the police, rather than the population itself has been realised by those who govern the destinies of India. Lord Linlithgow, the Viceroy evidently realised the need of some new method to

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hunt out the saboteurs, and end murders, when he sought to enlist Gandhi's sympathy towards his side. That his good sense had been shocked by such an orgy could be judged from his following letter to Gandhi :—

“ I felt certain that the detail those newspapers contained of what was happening would shock and distress you, as it has us all and your condemnation of it would be categorical and widely known. But that was not the case and it has been a real disappointment to me all the more when I think of these murders, the burning alive of police officials, the wrecking of trains, the destruction of property, the misleading of these young students, which has done so much harm to India's good name, and to the Congress party. You may take it from me that the newspaper accounts you mention are well founded. I only wish they were not, for the story is a bad one. I well know the immense weight of your great authority in the Congress movement and with the party and with those who follow its lead and I wish I could feel again, speaking very frankly that a heavy responsibility did not rest on you and unhappily while the initial responsibility rests with the leaders, others have to



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bear the consequences, whether as law breakers with the result that that involves or as the victims.”

Hopes that Gandhi could if he tried, set the affairs right, are intermingled with suspicions about the participation of Congressmen in the violent outrages. As the former view is flatly contradictory to the latter, it can be safely assumed that Indian rulers had faith in Gandhi's improving the situation. But then why not frankly say so, and let him introduce the democratic methods to prevent sabotage? He would not himself direct that democratic machinery on the spot, that would be the work of the Congress Governments when they could function in Provinces. His advice would be available to them. What he wanted was power for Congress, so that they could prevent all such happenings, and prepare the country for struggle against Fascism. To their legal measures against sabotage, based less on the idea of violence, but that of communal vigilance against saboteurs, and prevention of such crimes, so that there should be no need for giving punishment to the people, but reserving it for the culprits if any one was even then mad enough to commit the crime—could be added the weight of Gandhiji's moral influence.

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But Gandhi's voice or that of other Congress leaders could be heard only if they were entrusted with the task of preventing such measures, and ruling the people in accordance with democratic principles.

While Lord Linlithgow contended himself by expressing a pious wish that Gandhi should prevent violence, and at the same time costigated the Congress for backing up the trouble makers—Mr. Amery and other British officials were much more outspoken in their sentiments. The Government white paper had referred to Gandhi as leader of a defeatist organisation, who had himself agreed to negotiate with Japan if the National Government was formed.

How could they trust this man with establishing order in India, when he was continuously referred to as pro-Japanese?

As a matter of fact, the article in which Gandhi was reputed to have expressed a wish to negotiate with Japan was an out and out anti-Japanese. It was captioned "To every Japanese," and contained a denunciation of the path of sword that Japan had taken. If Gandhi had expressed a wish about the possibility of negotiations with Japan, then it was based on an unconditional surrender policy later outlined at Casablanca Conference by the allies. Japan



was to surrender all the conquered territory, and renounce Imperialism, as an instrument of its policy.

What Gandhi wanted was hardly different from what the United Nations Command desired from Japan. It is extremely unlikely however that holding the views he did on Japanese aggression, Gandhi could be ever allowed by the Nippon to come in his country, and preach Pacifism, renunciation of war spoils, and ending of Imperialist policy. If he had ever expressed such a wish it should have been treated much as the Reich or Italian Government would a similar wish of the late George Lansbury, if he were alive to-day. In the militarist Japan Gandhi's prototypes are executed as traitors to their country, because of their Pacifist and internationalist outlook. And yet the diehards were trying to read sinister motives in an otherwise harmless article of the Mahatma. Political blundering could scarcely go far. Just as Gandhi wanted a clean slate with Japan, before there could be any prospect of peace with that country so he wanted that Britain should modify her policy towards India and instead of repressive measures to combat sabotage, trust the people to prevent such crimes against the State. He wanted the Government to stop violence as reply of

violence of some irresponsible people, so that they should not have the opportunity to brand its actions as those of a foreign country suppressing people's urge of freedom, which was what the saboteurs termed the Government action to be. It was a lie, which could succeed only so long as the patriots were in prison, for along with sincere anti-Fascists in prison, the Fascists faced with Government repression could also pose as martyrs. Once a National Government was formed, and it began a clean up of the saboteurs, no complaints could be raised against it. The lie of the Fascists that they were patriots and were crushed by a foreign Government would have been nailed for ever.

That was what Gandhi advised the British to do.

Stop arrests and other measures, form a National Government and let it take up the defence of the country against the enemies within and without.

He wrote :—

“ That violence is not any the less so, because it is organised on a scale so gigantic that it displaces the Mosiac law of tooth for tooth, that of ten thousand for one, not to mention the corollary of the Mosiac law *i.e.*, of non-resistance enumerated by Jesus Christ. I cannot therefore interfere in any other



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manner the repressive measures of the all powerful Government of India.

“Add to this the tale of woe, the privations of the poor millions due to India wide scarcity, which I cannot help thinking might have been mitigated, if not altogether prevented, had there been a *bona fide* National Government responsible to a popularly elected Assembly.”

The Viceroy was grieved over the bloodshed in the country and wished to find out ways to end it. Gandhi was worried both about bloodshed and the food and other scarcity in the country. With the instinct of a *Bania*, he forestalled then the scarcity crises which have now enveloped the entire country, and which were evident even then, though without having reached the present acute stage. A good deal of energy of the Government is at present being devoted to the solving of food problem. Somebody warned them from behind the bars six months ago about it. He could be still helpful in ending or as he puts in mitigating the present scarcity. Only two ways are conceivable by which the present scarcity could end. The one is the State control of entire productive and consumptive system, and fixing of the prices, which would in fact be a Socialist measure, and could scarcely be limited to only food. An

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all embracing plan of Socialist economy will have to be introduced. It cannot be expected from our State as it is at present constituted that it could go red.

Even in England, it has not been done so and in India, where there is not such a vast influence of the Leftist elements over the State, and a big landlord of Scotland, with traditions of sanctity of private property deeply ingrained in him, is the Viceroy, the time is not yet ripe for such a move, nor would the Executive Councillors of the Viceroy ever countenance it. The New Viceroy Marshal Wavell is a soldier, and has the soldier's aversion to big business and capitalism, and though he would not like far-reaching Socialist reforms, may not have any objection to tightening the nose round the neck of capitalism in interests of the people. But he cannot go far enough. He is not a Socialist, nor would the Conservatives at home ever permit him to embark on such a wild goose chase.

Then the only other alternative to end food and other scarcity is by the co-operation of the capital, for the time being atleast in the adjusting of the crisis. This co-operation Gandhi can get for



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the asking, or without asking it if he were to go to Bombay, Delhi or Calcutta and observe a day of silence, leaving it to his Secretary to do the talking. Then it will be found how people begin to get rice in Bengal and flour and other edible articles in Delhi, Bombay and Lahore.

Worst famines than the present one have burst on the placid surface of India, and the indomitable will of Gandhi as well as the spirited co-operation of other Congress leaders has surmounted all difficulties. In his Province Gujrat Famine has been frequent, and even when it is combined with political disorders, as it is now, and as it was during Bardoli struggle, he has risen equal to the occasion.

Earthquakes, have also, like wars impoverished this country often, and then it was the Congress, which at Quetta, and Bihar saved the people from starvation.

The hoarder and the saboteur, the profiteer, who fleeces you of your valuables in the open market, and the robber who sacks your property in the riot, and makes away with what you have, can only be exterminated by one man—Gandhi.

He knows what the rich have and where they keep it. He can draw out of them enormous sums

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of money, as he has in the past and spend them on relief for the poor. When he speaks, and asks for money, jewels and gold pieces are offered by his rich devotees for the cause dear to his heart, just as in old days, merchants of Europe gave enormous sums to priests who called upon them to help the crusades against the absolutism of Sultans in Palestine. Aga Khan was only once, when he came to India weighed in gold by his followers. The gold lavished on Gandhi by Indian merchants in the past has been so enormous, that he could be weighed in it several times.

The robber who sacks other's mills and gets away with it would be restrained from his anti-social activities, once he has been given enough to eat. The saboteur will cease to exist, or at least, sabotage will be resorted to by only a handful of enemy agents, who could be with co-operation of the people brought to book soon. Such criminals could not escape the ever attentive gaze of the Mahatma, and once he speaks to them about the evil they are doing to their country, many of them would recant, and those who are indulging in such crimes stop their anti-National activities. That even hardened counter-revolutionaries are amenable to the influence of dazzling personality of the leader, and after his



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warnings recant and express regret for what they have done, is clear from the example of Russia, where even such unabashed enemies of the people as Bukharin, Zinoviev, Kamenev and Radek confessed their guilt, because they could not resist the influence of Stalin's personality and felt towards the end of their lives that the great leader of Russia was right and they were wrong. Men like Radek, who were spared the firing squad later on reformed themselves under the influence of the same great man.

Gandhi's views differ from Stalin, but there is no doubt he wields to-day a great influence among the people, and though he may not go far enough in economic matters yet so far as the counter-revolutionaries and saboteurs are concerned, they would stop their criminal actions, under Gandhi's influence.

But apart from socio-economic matters, there is another vital difference between Gandhi and Stalin. The Russian leader is the master of his own country, and can do what he likes. He knew the counter-revolutionaries and enemies of the people and he had them arrested. Gandhi knows those responsible for trouble in India, but he is helpless to do anything.

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If he could, he would certainly make India as much espionage and sabotage proof, as Stalin has Russia.

The present Viceroy, and for that matter his successor, too who have shown a keen desire to put an end to the outrages of violence, can do no better than to release Gandhi, and trust him to deliver the goods.

The apostle of non-violence can alone end violence.



## CHAPTER III

### Gandhi Listens

**W**HAT has held up improvement in relations of India and Britain is the question as to who should cut the ice first. Lord Linlithgow, inspite of the wishes expressed by him somewhat guardedly no doubt, in letters to Gandhi, for the end of violence as a result of the latter assuming the role of Britain's policeman in India, has not been able to make any effort to reconcile Gandhi. That is hardly in keeping with the British character. We are told that in their country they frequently tread on other's toes while travelling in Bus and promptly apologise. In India they have crushed an organisation, and feel as is clear from Lord Linlithgow's letters, that it is leading to nowhere—and yet they cannot come forward and admit their mistake. They are keeping the tension high by not forgetting the quarrel and making it up. But do they not realise that the question of loss of face nowhere comes up. They are simply making themselves ridiculous in the eyes of the public opinion of world by staying their hand from negotiations, when all the world knows that they sent Cripps here

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to bring about a reapproachment with Congress. If it was right to send Cripps here then, and open negotiations with Congress, it is right to do that now. After all what happened after Cripps departure was only a friendly quarrel in which both sides lost temper. Now that twelve months have lapsed since then, it is wise to bury the hatchet.

So far as Gandhi is concerned he should not be found inflexible in his desire to stick to "Quit India" plan. He saw through the letters of His Excellency a desire for end of the present ballyhoo, and he had dropped a hint of his willingness to negotiate with Britain, when he said "This time the retracing of steps lies with the Government."

This means in other words that if the Government called off the campaign of violence and put forward a plan of National Government there could be a possibility of the Congress coming to an agreement with it. Perhaps they will say that the old man is not laying all his cards on the table. Perhaps he is not. He has reason not to. Did he not lay all of them openly before the British before his arrest, when he said that he wanted to meet the Viceroy and talk things over with him. What did they then think of him? They thought he was only trying to fool



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them, and threw him into the prison.

Now if he were to express a wish in the same bland manner about seeing the Viceroy and ending the dispute they might smell rats again. So he is silent. Once he held out his hand and the other side did not come forward to take it. Now he wants them to take the initiative, and he would willingly accept their offer. The past record of the old man in negotiations during the campaigns of Civil Disobedience, should remove any suspicions of the white bureaucracy and the Viceroy about him. Did he not sign the Gandhi-Irwin Pact in teeth of opposition of the entire Nation, and inspite of the fact that no undertaking had been given by Britain to reprieve the three youngmen accused of murder of a Police officer ?

His visit to England to attend the Round Table Conference was hardly in keeping with the spirit of a “rebel”, which they have since then begun to call him. How many of their “rebels” in other countries have ever gone to England to attend Round Table Conferences, and indulge in Peace Parleys with British Ministers ? Did the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, and Rashid Ali of Iraq ever do that. They have been to Berlin, many times at Goering’s or

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Hitler's invitation, but not to London. Gandhi was not to rebel of that time. His non-violence teaches him above all things to forgive the enemy, if he admits that he is wrong, and there is a desire for Peace.

Back in 1923, he gave up his campaign on the flimsy pretext of murder of some policemen at Chaura Chāuri. In 1933, while still in prison about Civil Disobedience, he started a fast due to entirely a different reason—in order to redress the grievances of Harijans, and later on when he was released he gave up Civil Disobedience, and devoted himself to task of Harijan uplift to the exclusion of all other works.

They may ask, "why does not the old man indulge in one of such freaks now, and end the entire show." The answer to it is that his actions are not freaks of an eccentric but those of a man with a broad humanitarian outlook who is capable of feeling for the suffering of Harijans, or those among the ruling class (as is clear from Chaura Chauri happening) who suffer violence at hands of some people. He is inspired by the same humanitarian feelings now too, but he has his self-respect also, and he feels that the Viceroy in turning down his request to meet him, has made it impossible for him now to take the initiative for Peace.



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It has to be taken now by the British. Peace would not come if they continue to wait for the time when Gandhi could indulge in one of those old “freaks”, and by resorting to fasting or otherwise give up his campaign of Civil Disobedience. The days of such freaks are gone. Now if they want his humanitarian feelings to come into play, they can best use their successful campaign in South Europe, and ending of Fascist Empire there, to convince Gandhi and the Congress that they are fighting not only to liberate the people of Europe, but also of Asia and Africa too.

The humanitarian had doubts about their sincerity in fighting Fascism, and drew his own conclusions from it about their attitude towards ending of Imperialism in India. Now that their attitude towards Fascism has been clarified and they have waged a successful war against it, it is the time to end all suspicions about their attitude towards India too.

Wavell interviewed in England after his appointment to Viceroyalty said—“I have spent some of the best and pleasantest years of my life in India. I have great love for that country, and I hope in the new post with which I have been honoured to do something to repay the debt I owe to India. I shall do my best.”

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There is a soldier's frankness about his feelings in this statement. It is not hedged in on all sides by that Amery tinge about impossibility of doing anything in India, unless Hindu—Muslim question was solved. If the new Viceroy faces the task beset him in India with a similar frankness, it should not be long before an agreement is reached.

Hindu—Muslim question cannot prove to be barrier in Britain's parting with power in India. Even Jinnah's Pakistan is meaningless with the paramount power vested in the Viceroy, and his Governors, in the Provinces, where Jinnah would like to have complete autonomy. The interference of the centre with the Provinces which the League leader fears exists to-day, as it would if according to him a Hindu majority were to dominate in the centre. Let the British not forget the example of the days when Provincial autonomy was functioning in all the Provinces. Then Jinnah was blaming the Governors of Provinces for partiality towards Hindus. That blame he can place on them once again if the opportunity presents itself.

The best way to end the silly chatter of the League leaders is to give power to India, including the ending of Governor's prerogatives in Provinces, hold a referendum about separation in those Provinces, where the Leaguers indulge in tall talks about



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Pakistan, and abide by the verdict of the people. That would show which way the wind is blowing.

In any case they should turn it out of their heads that Muslim Leaguers, consider Hindus alone as barriers in their wild goose chase of Pakistan.

At present the British power in India is for them the greatest obstacle in their path. They may not say so.

But that should be the natural corollary of Pakistan. The idea that in any constitution that is introduced in India, the Congress would establish a one party dictatorship and ignore the Muslims altogether is similarly unfounded. It is born of British distrust of Congress Government's attitude in Foreign Policy. They consider the movement started after the August arrests, as one calculated to help the axis, and have no doubt that it was sponsored by the Congress. Since their fears have proved to be wrong, after a re-examination of the Congress Case for freedom, their gloomy forecasts about fate of Muslims should also be treated lightly:

The Congress has never asked for a one party Government ; in fact it has agreed to establishment of a National Government headed by Mr. Jinnah. If the wounded *amour propre* of the League leader, for not getting as much power as the Congress leaders

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enjoy among people, can be set right by such a gesture, they are willing to make it.

In this connection the suppressed letter of Gandhi to Jinnah deserves to be mentioned.

What Gandhi had written in it is not known. The Government are treating this letter as for instance the Government in Great Britain would, a letter to or from Germany to Rudolf Hess. There has been a hush hush campaign about it. But it is not difficult to guess what Gandhi had written therein.

He would have no doubt suggested to the League leader that since the British Government was continuously raising the scarecrow of communal question, it was well to talk it over between themselves, and he might have expressed a desire to see Jinnah.

This should be understood as marking a change in Gandhiji's previous attitude to this question. He had before his arrest declared that the British must "Quit India" before such communal matters could be settled. Now obviously he is willing to have it re-examined, though there can be no question of a surrender to Jinnah in matter of division of India. That has to be finally decided by the Muslims themselves as would be the personnel of the Government that they wish to form in the centre. Gandhi's gesture



## *“Quit India,” Re-examined*

only set at rest the lies spread about Congress aversion to claims of Muslim League. It was prepared to meet them, without sacrificing the interests of the Mussalmans, if the British could be thus persuaded to part with substance of power in India. Gandhi could not have committed himself to any far reaching change of Congress attitude in this matter. His previous correspondence with Jinnah, since published along with latter's speeches and writings, shows how non-committal he was, it was for the Congress Working Committee to thrash out final plan of agreement with League. This time he would have also made a broad gesture of friendship to Jinnah, couched his letter in the affectionate language in which he addresses him and left it to Congress to fill in the details of agreement.

But there is a marked difference between previous Jinnah-Gandhi Parleys, and this projected meeting which never materialised. Now it is not the Congress or the Muslim attitude, which matters alone in smoothing out differences. There are no League complaints to be examined, no joint or separate electorate issues, or differences of Assembly Seats. That epoch has ended. What Congress has demanded from Britain is substance of political power. What League wants is autonomy. It is for

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Britain to take the right step to promise how it would part with power, and in the meantime set up a National Government in the centre ; and reduce the powers of the Viceroy and the Governors. Then the Muslim League demands could be taken up. Pakistan is not a demand on Hindus, Congress or Gandhi. It is a demand on the British ; and identical with that of the Congress, only never voiced so emphatically.

The fate of any negotiations between Jinnah and Gandhi finally rests with Britain.

The Congress took a right step in resigning from ministries ; leaving the field open to the Muslim League to fill in the gap. That party instead continued to shout in the wilderness against alleged Congress atrocities on Muslims in Provinces. In some Provinces the Muslim Leaguers did attempt to form ministries, but not much success has been achieved in direction of winning over the confidence of the people and the power of the League ministers remains hanging in balance. Jinnah's dreams about having Muslim League ministries functioning in Provinces where Muslims are in a majority remain unrealised. He wanted to form a High Command on the model of that of the Congress with himself at its leaders but lies nowhere near to that.



## *“Quit India,” Re-examined*

In Punjab, the hotbed of Unionist Party, the League has not made much headway, and everyday it becomes clear to the League leaders that in a Province, where loyalty to British bureaucracy has been made the corner stone of Unionist policy, the Muslim League ideas cannot find such an easy outlet. It is not the Hindus of Punjab who are an obstacle in League leader's path, but a party which has hitched its bandwaggon to British conservatism and imbibed the ideas of Churchill and Amery about Empire and the place of Muslims in it rather than those of Mr. Jinnah.

Being thus stranded, the League is to-day nearer to the Congress than it has been for these ten years. To-day both are have-not parties without any political power and Mr. Jinnah must have realised that Congress apart, it is not easy matter to assimilate Muslims who would like to identify their interests with the foreign power.

There are greater chances of a League-Congress understanding now than there were previously at any time. And if the League leaders do not come forward for that other leaders among the Muslims could be found who would readily respond to the Congress call for unity.

Yet unity to what end ?

It should be a unity to end Fascism at home and abroad, and to change the present “have-not” character of both the League and the Congress into

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that of "haves."

A suggestion comes from Chungking to Great Britain from China's "La Passionaria" Madame Chiang-Kai-Shek. She wants Nehru to be released, so as to create a better atmosphere between the Congress and the Government. And there should be a four Nation mandate after the war to ensure freedom to all countries aspiring for it, which includes India. The one Nation mandate system is according to her a legacy of the treaty of the Versailles and should be abolished.

In Madame's own country, the Chinese united towards the end of 1946 in face of common enemy Japan, and in order to preserve their own Independence.

The long feud between Communists and Nationalists ended with dramatic imprisonment and then escape of Marshal Chiang-Kai-Shek. That example has not been held by Madame before our eyes in this brief message of sympathy to India, but we can scarcely overlook it. Indeed it should be in the background of this example that we should read the message of the great Chinese women leader.

As for her feelings for India her sincerity is unquestionable. She has the fire of a revolutionary in heart and thinks about India much like the



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women jacobins of the France that is now no more and whom one could before the war frequently meet in Champ Elsyees, or Cafes of Paris Bouleauvards, vehemently protesting against British rule in India, and talking about wild plans of insurrection with the backing of French jacobins. Madame has the same jacobin spirit about her though she has never indulged in such extremist talks about India which has been the habit of French women jacobins.

In the allied camp her voice also commands respect. It is the voice of the fighting China ; and its echoes would be heard by Lord Lions Mountbatten when he visits Chunking this month. The allies are making preparations for a great Pacific offensive, and are consulting about it the Chinese Generalissimo who enjoys a position of vantages in the East which General Giraud does in South Europe. Just as the campaign in the Mediterranean and in Southern Europe owes its success to willing co-operation of French Chief, similarly the Chinese Generalissimo has to play a great role in the Pacific war. If they are seeking his advice in military affairs, they might as well think about the political campaign among the people of the East, which should coincide with the launching of Military counterpart of it.

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Hints about that political campaign have been dropped by the wife of the Chinese Generalissimo, which would be no doubt picked up by the Allied Generals visiting the Marshal and the Madame. Her insistence on a four power mandate for all the countries aspiring for freedom should disillusion many of the Conservative Chauvinists in England and America, who had in mind a carve-up of the world into spheres of interest for those Nations. Madame Chiang-Kai-Shek had no desire to end Japanese hegemony in the Pacific, only to be substituted by that of the British or the Americans. In the past her own country had a sad experience of this bid of the great powers for hegemony in the Pacific, and on the Chinese mainland. Her country had upto 1930, faced such a situation in which England, America, Germany, France and Japan each had struggled to get best advantage out of it. She had separately fought the Western powers as well as Japan and succeeded in wiping out some of the humiliating treaties made with those powers in circumstances extremely unfavourable to China.

After 1930 the struggle was mainly directed against Japan, whose predatory claims had considerably increased. During this struggle she realised how the game of power politics was played between Western Nations and Japan and how one day they



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took her side and the next day, that of Japan. It was this power politics, or what the Germans call *Macht-politik* which stood in way of China getting any aid from the people of the Western countries, though every now and then they did send her messages of sympathy over the heads of their Governments. Clearly such a situation could not be repeated again after the war. Unless the four major powers of the United Nations Russia, America, China and Britain were linked together selfish persons would like to further their own interests at the expense of other Nations in the East. China carved up the future order in the East according to her own past experience and the conditions prevailing in her country. What she thought good enough for her, she wanted others to adopt in their country.

The reference to Versailles treaty makes the new order in East conceived by Madame Chiang-Kai-Shek clear still further. The Europe that emerged out of the Versailles treaty was dominated by England and France, whose energies were directed at holding down Germany, and preventing a better understanding or alliance between her and Russia. The result was that they failed in both of their attempts, forgot the purpose for which the war was fought and resorted to crude balance of power tactics which often humiliated them before such countries as Germany

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and Italy, not to mention Russia, about whom they had to make so many somersaults, and eat their own words.

Madame does not want after-Versailles conditions in East. Small Nations here like the Fillipino, the people of Malaya, Burma, Indo China, Siam and Dutch Indies, need not fear domination by victorious powers as happened to Rumania, Austria, Czechoslovakia and other small countries of Europe, who were made politically and financially dependent either on London or on Paris, or both. The bigger Nations, such as Japan, China, India and Russia, should not expect to be fooled, dominated, brow beaten, or isolated as happened in case of the Germans and Russians in After-Versailles Europe.

The Japanese people should also be reassured, for one of their oldest enemies, whom they took every opportunity to corner and oppress, has no intention of wreaking vengeance on them for the crimes of their Government and their militarists. They would not get a Versailles treaty as Germany got after the last war, but a four-power mandate, aimed at Independence of Japan and taking of its rightful place among the family of civilised Nations.

It would be the war criminals who alone would be punished by the allied invasion army when it lands in Japan and destroys Nippon's Militarist regime. There could be no desire to make occupa-



## *"Quit India," Re-examined*

tion of Japanese territory permanent or prevent functioning of a liberal regime there once the people gather together such a band of politicians. Considered the past crimes of Japan in China, Madame is generous towards the Japanese people. But clearly any other new order in the East based on democratic ideas is impossible.

Madame has outlined a plan which could very well be enlarged, after details have been filled in by the allied statesmen, into a Pacific Charter.

If the British and American statesmen agree with Madame Chiang-Kai-Shek in ending of hegemony of any one power in the East, from the Persian Gulf to the China Sea, and four powers give a Pacific Charter to the people of these countries, India could scarcely stay out, and its leaders who have the greatest regard for the Chinese Generalissimo and Madame, could not cold shoulder such a suggestion.

Nehru and Gandhi, whom she profoundly misunderstands, as she does for instance the Chinese Communist leaders or that other talented women of China though of course not so well-known to the world—Madame Sun Yet Sen, have also wanted a similar indivisible freedom in the East. The internationalist Nehru could not refuse to entertain any plan which aimed at liquidation of Anglo-American

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hegemony in the East, alongwith that of Japan. Gandhi called " Sentimental " by Madame who lives a life of seclusion in his Ashram and is moved by his own impulses and meditation rather than the study of the world events, would be emotionally stirred by such a plan and as it embraces a wide humanity, and is above the selfish interests of various Nations, he would have no hesitation in accepting it.

Madame Chiang-Kai-Shek's views provided a bases for launching of political warfare in the East, just as her country provides a base for attack on Japan. So far as India is concerned, they could adopt this policy alongwith immediate grant of a National Government at centre and satisfy the people here. But do Madame's views embody those of the ruling class in Great Britain ?

Would they care to have such a new order in the East, free of exploitation of China, India, Phillipines and the Dutch Indies, those capitalists, and speculators of the city of London and the wall street who are proving a great obstacle in the way of those in England and America, who want Socialism to be adopted atleast, partially in their countries ?

One of the oldest critics of that ruling class George Bernard Shaw in a letter to P. B. Seal, Chairman of Tagore Society, thus expressed himself on Indian situation :—



## *“Quit India,” Re-examined*

“You may quote me as declaring that the imprisonment of Gandhi is the stupidest blunder the Government has let itself be landed in by its right-wing of incurable diehards. It and the unpardonable flogging business associated with it has wiped out our moral case against Hitler. The King should release Gandhi unconditionally as an act of grace unconnected with policy and apologise to him for the mental defectiveness of his Cabinet. That would do what is possible to save the Indian situation.”

The mental defectiveness of the present British Cabinet may be a typical shavian jib, but there is no doubt that the British case against Hitler weakens in Europe, due to lack of a democratic policy in East. The political warfare in the East and that in the West are linked up with each other. A mistake here inevitably effects the course of events there, and the way political problems are treated in Europe give us a foretaste of what is to happen in the East.

At the present the gaps in the political campaign in the West have yet to be filled up. While the military campaign is moving in a successful way the political one is far from satisfactory. The main differences with Russia both about its Geographical frontiers in New Europe, and its attitude on such matters as the working class in other countries and,

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religion inside its own land, remain unsolved. There is a good deal of rehearsal of Victorian drawing room etiquette going on in Madrid, between Franco and Sam Hoare, in which profuse apologies are being murmured by either side for any inconvenience rendered to each other and mutual re-assurances exchanged for the future. They do not mark the Spanish Caudillo as a Fascist, and a friend of the Fascists to be dealt with accordingly as the axis have Russia, but treat the gangster with blood of million of republicans on his hands, as an old fashioned Conservative gentleman whose words are trusted. They forget President Roosevelt's saying that there are no neutrals in this war, and those who are not with us must be presumed to be against us. They are trying to end Fascism in Europe, and leaving it intact in Spain.

About Italy the political policy is far from clear. They do not tell us whether the Peace which they propose to have with Italy on conditions of unconditional surrender is to mean freedom for the Italian people or their being saddled with rule of a Vatican sponsored Catholic party or Victor Emmanuel sponsored Royalist party.

No clear-cut policy has been framed about the German people and whether they are to be treated according to Vansittart mythology or in keeping with liberal democratic tradition, reserving the revenge for



## *"Quit India," Re-examined*

war criminals only. The Labour Party which is a progressive organisation has put the clock back, by adopting Vansittart mythology about guilty Germans.

When a progressive organisation like that of Labour in England adopts such a reactionary method of political warfare about Germany, what is one to expect of it about India after all the nonsense talked in British Conservative Press about the Congress having launched a campaign in 1942 to favour Japan. Would they not readily believe it, if they have swallowed hook, line and sink all the rubbish talked about in Vansittart's "Black Record"? One suspects they would scarcely follow the advice of Madame Chiang-Kai-Shek about shaking off Versailles mentality in modern times, but instead adopt a policy similar to Germany about the Japanese people also; thus unwittingly handing over not only Japan, but the entire East forward from Persian Gulf to the rule of Colonel Blimps.

Vansittartism in the East means not only a wrong policy about the people of Japan, but also about India. It means acceptance of Conservative view about Congress, and treating of it accordingly. Vansittartism is undisguised blimpism, and disastrous as a policy, whether in the East or in the West.

At present England is far from adopting Madame Chiang's New order in East plan. It might adjust

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its attitude as the military collaboration with China increases, as that gallant soldier—Wavell, who had great occasion to be with the Chiangs becomes Indian Viceroy. He might turn over a new leaf in political warfare in the East, and steer clear of conservative hotheads and Labour Party Vansittartites in England.

But even he cannot act Independently of Whitehall in all matters. Whether he would guide Whitehall about policy here and have his plans adopted as Eisenhower does in South Europe remains to be seen.

In any case it is the policy in Europe that would ultimately reflect a change in that of the East. If they modify political warfare in the continent they would do the same in India.



## CHAPTER IV

### **America and the East.**

**T**HE American interest in India flared up after the outbreak of the war in the Pacific, dimmed for sometime, and is now again flaring up, though it has not yet found an outlet in some official move from Washington. Indeed one might say that this American interest in India intermittently silenced, and awakening has yet to mature and be translated into action. What little action accompanied the first flare up of interest before the Cripps mission was very ineffective, and halt-hearted like American policy about China from 1930 onwards to the Pearl Harbour. Just as about China, there was a desire to help the democratic cause in that country against Japan, and yet at the same time hesitation to offend the latter so about India, they wanted to take interest in our affairs, yet did not wish to displease Britain.

But as always happens in case of ideas which have not been matured in action, and have not poured down a channel forming their own course as well as effecting the destinies of people to whom they are directed, American attitude about India remained

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a strange conglomeration of sentimentalism, humanitarian motives and fears of adverse effect in their own interests.

Their faint intervention in Cripps mission was due to fear of imminent Japanese invasion, and a last minute attempt to close up the ranks in the anti-Fascist Front in India. The Japanese invasion did not come, but instead came the invasion of North Africa by American forces towards the end of last year. This invasion had taken place after an understanding had been arrived at between French authorities there and American Government, so that there was very little resistance, except from axis agents in Africa and alongwith their French and British allies the Americans were able to launch an attack against the Germans in Tunisia, and achieve considerable success from the outset culminating in a final victory.

The American diplomacy in North Africa, which was responsible for alliance with those French officers who were till now either supporters of Vichy or near Vichyists, aroused a bitter controversy in England among a certain section of Press, who said that the Yanks were hobnobbing with near-Fascists, and propping up a new Fascism in Europe which was to have as its capital Washington rather than Berlin.

The Americans retorted by telling the British



## *“Quit India,” Re-examined*

that it did not lie in their mouths to accuse them of Fascism in Africa, when they were muddling through in India, and ruling in a way, which could hardly justify their democratic slogans in Europe.

This was the second phase of American “interest” in India ; it lasted as long as the tension in Africa did. Side by side with the fighting in Africa, were continued wordy duels across the Atlantic between British and American Press, about American “Fascism”, and British “Imperialism.”

An impetus was added to this Transatlantic cannonade by the worsening situation in China and Russia, which led to angry speeches of Mr. Wendell Wilkie, and his other fellow-travellers about a change in American policy towards Russia, China, and the entire people of Asia.

Gandhi's fast which came early this year received due notice in America, and while there was no desire to rush headlong into intervention in India, this was used as a club to bludgeon the British Left, who were far from satisfied with affairs in Tunisia, the continued existence in office of such avowed Vichyists as Peyrouton etc., and Giraud's attitude towards release of anti-Fascist prisoners in French North Africa. But as the tide of the war gradually turned in favour of the United Nations and German armies were swept back, American, and for that matter British interest too became centered on Southern

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European bastions of Fascism and how to conquer them.

India was gradually relegated to background, as also the utterly silly controversy about pot calling the kettle black, the British left accusing the Americans about Fascism, and the latter hitting out at Indian administration—all this paled into insignificance before the new problems facing the allies. American interest in India had dimmed. Not even the curt refusal of the Government of India, about permission to Mr. Phillips to see Gandhi and Nehru, could provoke Americans into anger or fire them with determination to see the Indian problem through. The American Press which previously replied effectively to the wordy duels from across the Atlantic was now all for allowing free hand to Britain to pursue a Monroe doctrine in her possessions. The comment of "*Washington Post*" revealed the American state of mind on Government of India's refusal to Mr. Phillips, as well as their reading of the situation in India after months of "Quit India" campaign : —

"It is unfortunate that permission was not granted to Mr. Phillips to see Indian leaders" wrote the paper, and added "yet under the existing circumstances the British can hardly be blamed for taking the stand they did. A visit by Mr. Phillips



## *“Quit India,” Re-examined*

to Gandhi and Nehru would probably have been interpreted throughout the length and breadth of India as an indication that the United States was ready to intervene in the Indian situation. It might therefore have revived the bitter controversy that had led the Indian Government to jail the nationalist leaders last year and provoked a revival of the disturbances harmful to the war effort. Evidently the British are content to let the sleeping dogs lie. Whether or not such a policy is wise in the long run, there can be little doubt that the Indian situation is less disturbed to-day than it was a year ago.”

The people of India had already come to the conclusion that there was an inclination in United States to get the Indian affair settled, but that country was not prepared to commit itself far in matter of intervention in India. Whether Mr. Phillips was allowed to see Gandhi and Nehru or not, that view about America was maintained. After all Mr. Phillips had applied to see Gandhi, with certain good objects in view. These were noted by the people here, as also the American complacency over British refusal of permission to him. It was no use pretending [as “*Washington Post*” did that since Phillips had not been allowed to see Gandhi, we should assume it that Americans were disinterested in India. Nobody could ever believe that.

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As for the disturbances increasing in country if he had been allowed to see Indian leaders, there was little chance of that. If Phillips had succeeded in his mission Gandhi would have been released and he would have stopped the disturbances. If he had not, then it was easy for the people to see that Indian problem was not receiving due attention either in America or in England, and country would have remained as before without a National Government. The rioters could be dealt with now as before by the Government, for if it was strong enough to liquidate their trouble previously, it could do so again.

To sum up there could be no recrudescence of trouble if Mr. Phillips had seen the leaders. If anything there would have been a change for the better.

The situation was no doubt better at that time as "*Washington Post*" said, it was, but only so far as violence was concerned. In other respects with the leaders held behind the bars how could they call the situation better. So far as the food scarcity, and lack of popular Government in Provinces was concerned, it was if anything worse.

A similar optimistic note was struck by Mr. Sumner Welles, the U. S. A. under-Secretary of State



## *“Quit India,” Re-examined*

in a letter to Prof. Ralph Barton Perry of the Howard University in reply to criticism made against State Department policy. The letter was written in April, 1943. Answering the condemnation of the United States failure to intervene in the Indian deadlock Mr. Welles wrote :—

“ The present military situation in the Far East is one where in all of us, including the people of India face grave perils. The future constitutional status of India is a tremendously complicated and difficult problem. The United States Government of course are anxious to give full assistance in its solution. The people of India have been most solemnly assured that as soon as necessities of war permit they will be given an opportunity to choose freely the form of Government they desire. The wise men vitally concerned both with the welfare of the people of India and with the defeat of our enemies may differ as to the possibility of fighting the war and solving India's historic problems at the same time. But to make an active intervention in the Indian situation, is a test of liberalism, which I must confess is beyond my comprehension.”

Apart from the fact that no reference has been made to “ Hindu-Muslim differences,” but instead the situation in India described as “ tremendously

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complicated and difficult," this letter may have been written by Mr. Amery or some other Conservative Ministers of England. The scarecrow of Japanese menace is being raised again inspite of the fact that the Nippon has failed to make a dash into India, and is reeling back in the South Pacific, while blows from the air on her bases in China such as Canton and Hong Kong are demoralising him. There was atleast acute danger of Japanese invasion in summer of 1942 threatening the people of India, and although not granting a National Government at the centre as a first step of ultimate complete freedom was then an unwise move, it could be explained away by Jap menace. Now they can't do it over again.

The necessities of war "permit" now a change in the Government at centre. Though constitution making could be left to peace time, there could be atleast a strong new National Government functioning while the war lasts.

Other countries have changed their Governments right in midst of war, in fact with invasion threatening their homes—that happened in England after the Norwegian disaster, when Chamberlain went out and Churchill came in. Why do they prevent us in India from elbowing out Chamberlains and replacing them by Churchill to ensure better conduct of war?



*W. H. Shaw*  
**"Quit India," Re-examined**

Mr. Sumner Welles also like Amery is overawed by the "complicated and difficult" state of affairs in India. This lack of desire to have any, but the most gloomy view of the situation before him has been responsible for his ultimate failure as U. S. A. under-Secretary of State. He has found the problem of Russia like that of India "complicated and difficult" and there has been no great improvement in relations of U. S. A. and Russia, since he was entrusted with the task of smoothing out the differences of two countries about political outlook on Europe. His failure has led to his resignation.

What is clear about India and Russia is not that it is difficult to reconcile their interests with those of the United Nations, but that there are certain matters effecting mutual relations which need detailed examination. This does not mean that the relations of these countries with West should continue to be marred by past suspicion and bitterness, which should have no place in the new world which we all want to create. What is wanted is a working agreement for the present which should ensure maximum success to the cause of anti-Fascism, while details could be left to some future date.

Why should Mr. Sumner Welles and other Americans fight, so shy of "active intervention" in

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India? Why talk about "intervention" when the matters to be decided are of common interest, between allies in struggle against Fascism. "Intervention" smacks of outside interference in our affairs. It gives the impression that Indian affair is purely a matter between India and Britain, in which other countries forming the United Nations should have no interest. This is not true. There can be no "localising" of differences between United Nations. A matter which effects one effects the other. Would a British attempt to bring about closer understanding between Russia and America be called "active intervention"? The American ex-under-Secretary by thus treating his countries' collaboration to end the dispute between two countries fighting against Fascism as comrades introduces that typical blimpism in international politics, which assumes Britain to be overlord of India, and ourselves a Vassel State of England. He affirms the distinction between the ruler and ruled, rather than putting all countries fighting Fascism on equal footing, and considering a dispute between the two as a matter vitally effecting all.

And if those high and mighty people of America, still consider collaboration with Britain to solve Indian problem as "intervention" and therefore to be avoided because of the all important problem of defeating Japan, one might ask them would they



## “Quit India,” Re-examined

stand by passively if any one of the countries in Latin America are in a disturbed State? Have they ever hesitated from “intervening actively” in South America, even right in midst of War? Would Argentine, Chile, or Brazil without a National Government at centre be tolerated by U. S. A.? If not, why should they hold up their hands in holy horror at the mention of idea of “intervention” in India?

Monroe doctrine since the American participation in war should not be interpreted in the narrow sense it used to be. If America has taken up arms against Japan to free the East, no country in this hemisphere should be allowed to remain in a chaotic state without popular Government functioning in the Centre or Provinces. Some realisation about this condition seems to have dawned on the Americans in the recent days. With the first round of battle won in South Europe, their attention is being diverted to the East also. Though a large scale offensive against Japan, must yet be held in abeyance till Germany is knocked out, the Far East will receive greater attention now than it has done for some time past. But in that case the stalemate in India must end. The complacency evident in tone of Sumner Welles and Washington is nowhere to be seen in the recent comment of *New York Times* on the anniversary of

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August bloodshed :—

“The passage of a year has left political India exactly where it was, when the Indian leaders were arrested. Militarily the anniversary shows a far greater change. India has become the arsenal and the fighting base for the allies. If the change in the military prospect were matched by a comparable improvement in the political status, many minds would feel easier.

“As it is, India remains one of the greatest problems on the post-war agenda of Britain, if not of the United States.

“Disputants of outside intervention tend to simplify it. Those immediately concerned seemed to be anchored on flat convictions. All, however, seem to agree that politically India is still inchaote, that no real solution is in sight.”

The *New York Times* is a Conservative paper, and by no means a *Manchester Guardian* of U. S. A. It could scarcely be said to be biased in favour of India. It rejoices over the changed military situation and feels that uneasiness in U. S. A. would end if political situation in India were also to change. The “flat convictions” of both sides are also regretted and finally the disturbed state of this country is again admitted and conditions here described inchaote.

While outside intervention is described as



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difficult in face of inflexibility on both sides, there is no desire of U. S. A. to retire in its own shell. It must be understood that American Press has been previously blandly apathetic to India. This statement cuts the ice. It wildly reproves the two sides for not taking any step to end the present state of affairs. But the Congress leaders are held behind the bars, and helpless to intervene, hence it is Britain which has to take a step that would make American minds “feel easier.”

But is this revival of interest in America going to prove a mere “flop” as in case of last year or will the yanks come forward, and stabilise the Indian situation? Are they starting a political offensive in the East right now or will they wait for the time when Military offensive is to be launched?

Americans best know its answer. But there is no doubt about it, that they can implement the scheme of new order in the East outlined by Madame Chiang-Kai-Shek or any other scheme; if they so desire. The idea that their object is to defeat the axis in collaboration with Britain and they are not concerned with *orient politik* of the latter does not stand examination. They have a military collaboration with Russia, but have they for that matter given up interest in international policy of that country or such internal affairs as religious freedom? If they can expect a changed

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attitude from Russia towards the Communist Parties of other countries and religious affairs, and receive Russian assurances in matters of both, why don't they ask Britain for a similar change in India? After all it is not "merely military collaboration" against the axis that has been kept in view in the past.

The moral responsibility of U. S. A. towards this country has increased since the landing of American troops here. The State Department's declaration that these troops are here only to protect India from Japan, and the U. S. A. citizens here should steer clear of internal affairs in this country, should be understood in the same sense in which the neutrality of U. S. A. people was affirmed in the affairs of Europe after the outbreak of war.

It was pointed out then, as it has not been in case of India, that intellectually no neutrality was possible. Only neutrality in military affairs was desired. Later America came over on the side of freedom in the European disputes.

The same is the case with India. Intellectually American neutrality is not possible. What the Indian people want is maximum freedom now to destroy the axis in interest of the future freedom of the world. U. S. A. wants to destroy the axis too. It believes in freedom also. It should therefore



*Shival*  
27/9/59

## *"Quit India," Re-examined*

actively interest itself in matters of India, get the dispute between Britain and Congress patched up, and carry war into Japanese possessions.

The American Command here can no more remain indifferent to internal affairs of this country than it could in North Africa, where time and again it was declared that U. S. A. wanted the war against axis to be fought to the finish in collaboration with General Giraud, and the political problems of French administration could be settled after the war. They couldn't do that. They had to make a working agreement with General de Gaulle and stabilise the French administration after purging out the Vichyists like Marcel Peyrouton. French political problem was creating such an acute crisis that threatened the entire military operations in that region. It is no longer doing that.

About India the same is true. The State Department and its representatives here should modify their outlook about Indian political affairs as they did about French. They cannot go on with military collaboration alone of one party of anti-Fascists in India—the equivalent of Giraudists—British ; while the other party of anti-Fascists is held behind the bars. They are the De Gaulists, India's foremost fighters against Fascism. Release them as

they released the International Brigadiers, French Communist Deputies and other anti-Fascists in Tunisia, as a first condition of collaboration with de Gaulle. End the rule of Marcel Peyroutons lurking about here and there in Indian administration, and substitute the present one party rule with a joint administration of India for the duration of war, after which it should be left for the people of this country to decide the constitution they want for themselves.

The "Quit India" campaign like the "Quit Africa" campaign of General de-Gaulle against Giraud, Darlan, and Vichyists, can change with circumstances. It is not the last word in Congress policy. The De-Gaulist campaign to acquire North Africa for the fighting French was based on the idea that Giraud and his Vichyist Lieutenants were unable to carry forward the past heritage of France, and maintain its independence in face of German infiltration. They thought them as near Fascists, and they resented the repression against anti-Fascist in North Africa and their continued imprisonment there. Similarly the Indian leaders thought that the Government of this country ought to be hands in people who were opposed to Fascism in all forms, including the Imperialist brand of it, rather than let the power rest with those who were unwilling to democratise war and



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thus assure maximum resistance to the enemy. The Indian patriots held the British responsible for disasters in Burma, as the fighting French did the regime in North Africa for collapse of France.

Time has falsified the worst fears of the fighting Frenchmen and Giraudists have both fought well against Fascism, as well as initiated the changed policy towards anti-Fascists so much desired by General de Gaulle.

In India too thanks to American aid and strengthening of defences by the British, the mistakes of Burma have not been repeated. Japan has been shown a stiff upper lip while the determined blows against Italian Fascism in Africa tend to remove the impression that the cause of freedom will be ditched by the allies.

As in Africa, the stage is set here for an alliance between the two parties ranged against Fascism—the British and the Congress. And here as in that country America is best fitted to play the role of mediator. But it can only be an alliance on equal footing and it must proceed by a General amnesty to those held behind the bars.

